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## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 17, 1915

Two meetings of the Executive Committee were held during the year, in each case at the City Club, New York. At the first meeting, on March 13, the program and other arrangements for the San Francisco meeting were informally discussed. Invitations for the December meeting having been received from Lexington, Indianapolis, and Cincinnati, it was voted that Lexington be deemed the first choice of the committee, subject to the findings of certain inquiries about local facilities, and that Indianapolis be deemed the second choice. The power of making a final decision was given to the President and Secretary.

The following were appointed members of the Committee upon Federal Work in Statistics, created at the previous annual meeting:<sup>1</sup> G. E. Barnett, J. L. Coulter, J. A. Field, W. C. Mitchell, and W. F. Willcox, chairman. W. M. Persons was later added to the committee. Two resolutions which had been introduced at the annual meeting, relating to the preparation of the national budget and to a proposed investigation of occupational mortality<sup>2</sup> and disability were referred to this new committee.

Acting upon the preference expressed by the Executive Committee, and after making sure that the local facilities were in all ways adequate, the President and Secretary chose Lexington, Ky., as the place of holding the twenty-eighth annual meeting. Later, however, the officials of the Second Pan American Scientific Congress asked the co-operation of the American Economic Association, and it appeared that the meetings of Section IX of the Congress would attract a number of our members. These new considerations were set before the Executive Committee by correspondence and a ballot was taken by mail which authorized the transfer of the meeting to Washington.

The second meeting of the Executive Committee, held on July 13, was devoted to the discussion of plans for the Washington meeting, including the matter of coöperation with the Second Pan American Scientific Congress and with the American Historical Association.

Professor E. R. A. Seligman, chairman of our special committee on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure, reported on April 16 that it was proposed to merge the joint committee of nine, representing

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting*, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting*, pp. 302, 303.

the American Economic Association, the American Political Science Association, and the American Sociological Society, with a new committee of fifteen, acting as a committee of the American Association of University Professors. It appeared to the officers of the Association that the authorization given to our committee "to coöperate with any similar committees which may be constituted by other societies in the field of the social sciences"<sup>3</sup> was broad enough to cover the proposed merger. This opinion was submitted to the members of the Executive Committee, and, no dissent being expressed, Professor Seligman was informed that the step proposed was within the powers of his committee.

The special meeting of the Association held at San Francisco, Berkeley, and Palo Alto in August was attended by some sixty members. The program, arranged by the local committee on arrangements in coöperation with the President of the Association, was appropriate to the time and place. The meeting afforded a pleasant occasion for the gathering of the economists of the Pacific coast, who constituted about half of the members present, and who are too widely separated by distance to have many opportunities of the kind, and it also made it possible for some of their colleagues in the Middle West and East to come into touch with them.

The changes in our list of members and subscribers are as follows:

Members resigned .....	159
Members removed for lack of address.....	5
Members dropped for non-payment of dues.....	82
Members removed by death .....	26
Subscriptions discontinued .....	9
Total subtractions .....	281
New members added .....	214
New subscribers added .....	42
Total additions .....	256
Net loss .....	25

Our members and subscribers now number 2444. Of these 2004 are members paying annually; 80 are life members; 7 are honorary members; and 353 are subscribers.

The net loss of 25 members and subscribers is smaller than in any other year since the increase in the annual dues from three dollars to five. This may be taken to indicate that we are approaching a state of "normal equilibrium"; that with the continued help of those members who are actively interested in the work of the Association it may

<sup>3</sup> *Proceedings Twenty-sixth Annual Meeting*, p. 197.

be possible to maintain our membership at its present figure. To many of our members the Secretary is indebted for coöperation of that efficient and fruitful sort which costs its givers both time and thought. And it is certain that coöperation of this kind will continue to be needed, if only to hold our membership where it is. Our present income from membership dues and subscriptions is adequate to support the work we are now doing, but does not afford a margin for any substantial increase in our expenditures. The Managing Editor of the *American Economic Review* finds himself hampered in various ways by reason of the strict economy which has to be observed in the conduct of that publication. More liberal payment for contributions and for assistance as well as for a better grade of printing would enable him to effect substantial improvements in our already excellent journal. It is to be hoped, too, that the Association will be able before long to resume the publication of monographs. Outside of a few large universities facilities for the publication of scholarly monographs in the field of economics are very meager. If the Association should be able to publish one or two monographs a year as supplements to the *Review*, it would not only perform a real service, but would increase the value of membership in the Association. Possibly it might be well in the near future to undertake the publication of one annual monograph. As the selection of a single monograph for publication would in itself be deemed an honor, the matter might be arranged in the form of a prize competition and possibly, after the fashion of the successful competitions conducted by the Royal Statistical Society (and many other learned societies), a medal might be awarded the successful competitor.

It is possible, also, that the Association needs new activities for the sake of its own health. With our finances in good condition, our journal admirably conducted for us, and our meetings bringing annually their full measure of stimulating discussion and pleasant associations, we may be in danger of falling into a pleasant path of routine, calculated in the end to weaken our influence. Might we not make a larger use of investigations and reports by special committees than we have in the past? Each year a number of new issues, involving fundamental economic questions, come to the foreground. The economists of the country are continually being appealed to in these matters, but they speak only through individual voices, here and there. Without departing from our declared determination to "take no partisan attitude" nor to commit our members "to any position on practical economic questions," there is much that we could do in securing some consensus of opinion on a number of technical economic problems. We needn't agree

in matters of general economic policies; we might agree on certain matters of technique. No part of the work of the young and vigorous National Tax Association has been more valuable than the reports from its special committees upon a number of tax problems. Are not such pressing matters as the economic aspects of unfair competition, railway valuation (a distinctly economic problem which the accountants and engineers have well-nigh taken from us), the measurement of wealth and income in the United States, the economic aspects of conservation,—and a host of others,—topics upon which we as economists might have something to say that would be worth saying, and which we could say with larger influence through committees of this Association than in any other way? Work on such committees takes time, and it would be unfair to ask our members to serve in this way unless we could supply funds for necessary clerical expenses and assistance.

These things seem to point toward the desirability of some increase in our membership, if that can be secured without any sacrifice of our position as an organization of persons interested in the scientific study of economic problems.

The list of deaths among our membership reported to the Secretary during the year includes the names of a number who had been long on our rolls and whom we had learned to honor for their faithful and efficient service in the field of economic scholarship.

JOHANNES CONRAD	CHARLES L. LOOP
(Honorary Member)	WILLIAM LUMMIS
CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS	E. S. MARLOW
NELSON W. ALDRICH	LEE McCLUNG
JOHN HAMILTON BLAIR	CHARLES W. MICHAEL
GUY STEVENS CALLENDER	EDWARD BUNNELL PHELPS
KATHARINE COMAN	SERENO S. PRATT
CHARLES ARTHUR CONANT	EDWARD VANDYKE ROBINSON
GRACE H. DODGE	JULIUS ROTTENBERG
E. L. R. GOULD	WILLIAM SMART
W. M. GROTON	SAMUEL G. SMITH
CHARLES R. HENDERSON	ELMER B. WALLER
DAVID HUTZLER	PETER WHITE
F. BROMLEY JANSEN	

Respectfully submitted,

ALLYN A. YOUNG,  
*Secretary.*